



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

**REGION 8, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 10 West 15th St., Suite 3200
HELENA, MONTANA 59626**

Ref: 8MO

December 13, 2011

Mary C. Erickson, Supervisor
Gallatin National Forest
10 East Babcock Street
P.O. Box 130
Bozeman, MT 59771

Re: CEQ 20110405; Bozeman Municipal Watershed
Project Final Supplemental EIS (November 2011)

Dear Ms. Erickson:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region VIII Montana Office has reviewed the latest November 2011 Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) for the Bozeman Municipal Watershed Project in accordance with EPA responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

This latest FSEIS includes no additional analysis, and appears to be limited to Appendix B responses to the comments received on the May 2011 FSEIS, with factual corrections, sources where comments are addressed, and minor changes in content. We have no additional substantive comments on this latest FSEIS.

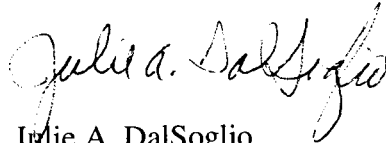
The EPA continues to support the project purpose and need to reduce hazardous fuels and fire risk/severity in the municipal watershed for the City of Bozeman to reduce the risk of excess sediment and ash reaching the municipal water treatment plant, as well as to reduce fire risk/severity to the wildland urban interface (WUI), and increase firefighter and public safety in the event of a wildfire. We are pleased that the preferred alternative, Alternative 6 with minor modifications, meets all applicable water quality laws, regulations and Forest Plan Guidance for Bozeman Creek and Hyalite Creek, and that all required water quality permits would be acquired by the Gallatin National Forest prior to any ground disturbance activities for the project. We appreciate the Gallatin National Forest's efforts to minimize potential impacts to water quality from the proposed Bozeman Municipal Watershed Project, and coordinate with the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) in making project modifications.

We recognize that land management decisions involve environmental and resource management trade-offs (i.e., trade-offs in impacts among vegetation treatments, fire and fuels, water quality and aquatics, wildlife, and other resource impacts). The Gallatin National Forest appears to have considered the long term trade-offs associated with potentially severe wildfire and high sediment increase risk in comparison

to the impacts of implementing the vegetation management activities in this proposal, and the possible short-term increases in sediment to the City of Bozeman water treatment plant.

The EPA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment during the NEPA process for this project. If you have any questions regarding our input please contact Mr. Steve Potts of my staff in Missoula at 406-329-3313 or in Helena at (406) 457-5022. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Julie A. DalSoglio".

Julie A. DalSoglio
Director
Montana Office

cc: Suzanne Bohan/Judy Roos, EPA, 8EPR-N, Denver
Mark Kelley/Robert Ray, MDEQ, Helena
Teri Seth, Gallatin National Forest, Bozeman Ranger District